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INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 7397
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 3851
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2925
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RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0491
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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CORREA ON
COLOMBIAN MILITARY OPERATION

Classified By: Ambassador Linda Jewell for reason 1.4 (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Meeting with the Ambassador on March 3, President Correa expressed outrage at President Uribe for bombing his country, saying he expected the international community to condemn unprovoked aggression. He said the GOE had no relationship with the FARC, and accepted the Ambassador's statement that the Manta FOL had not supported the Colombian military operation. Correa plans to visit all countries bordering Colombia in the coming days to seek solidarity for its position. The Foreign Minister departs March 3 to attend OAS sessions on the incident scheduled for March 4. End Summary

¶2. (C) The Ambassador met with President Correa at his request late in the afternoon of March 3. Foreign Minister Salvador also participated. Correa expressed anger that Uribe had "stabbed me in the back." He recalled their conversation just last week when they discussed the possibility of Correa visiting a bioethanol facility in Colombia, saying that Uribe had to have known at that time what was planned and did not say a word to Correa about it, deliberately deceiving him. Correa feels that this deception continued in Uribe's first phone call about the incident, when he indicated that the attack happened when in hot pursuit of FARC targets. Correa believes evidence now demonstrates that the action was a premeditated bombing of Ecuadorian territory against targets that were sleeping.

¶3. (C) Correa expressed unhappiness with the Department deputy press spokesman's remarks, calling them "tepid." He said he expected the United States, and the international community, to support international law and condemn "unprovoked aggression."

¶4. (C) Correa considered it unfair to say that the GOE had not supported efforts against terrorism. He cited the arrest of Simon Trinidad in 2004 and recent Ecuadorian military operations against FARC camps in northern Ecuador. Correa assured the Ambassador that the GOE has no relationship with the FARC. He repeated this several times and specifically asked that it be conveyed to Washington. He said he had authorized Minister Larrea to try to obtain release of ten hostages held by the FARC, including the three Americans, as a humanitarian effort, but that he was in no way supporting the FARC's cause.

¶5. (C) Countering what had been the subject of some local speculation, the Ambassador assured Correa that the U.S. Forward Operating Location (FOL) in Manta, Ecuador, had not

provided intelligence nor had any role in the Colombian military,s operation. Correa thanked her and said he believed her. He asked that she also believe him that the GOE has no relationship with the FARC. He thought that the issue of Larrea,s contacts with the FARC was being used to distract from the issue of the incursion.

16. (C) Correa informed the Ambassador that he would be visiting all countries bordering Colombia, starting with Peru on March 4. He also mentioned Brazil, Venezuela, and Nicaragua. (Panama will presumably be included, although it was not mentioned.) Meanwhile, FM Salvador departs the evening of March 3 to attend OAS meetings on the situation in Washington on March 4.

JEWELL